9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

conquer the Germans as they conquered us.' The Ngoni are by no means unaware of white political antagonism and questioned me closely about present day relations between English and Germans, and between English and Dutch in South Africa. Though they have seen from their own observation that modern warfare as practised by Europeans is entirely different from warfare as they knew it, they are nevertheless interested in war to-day as an 'instrument of national policy'.

It is from this angle that the Ngoni in Mpezeni's country regard the 'war' between them and the British in 1898. It was a trial of strength; they were defeated by superior power.[1] When the Ngoni tell the story of this war they make it clear that just as they had defeated the other tribes with their superior weapons, so it was British superiority in weapons which won the day, because their machine-guns were used with deadly force on the Ngoni warriors. The version of the fighting current in the villages was told me many times, always with a note of awe and horror at the unexpected and overwhelming catastrophe. When the British punitive force camped outside Mpezeni's kraal, the Ngoni war *induna* sent to ask if they were ready to fight. The reply was, 'Wait, the *Azungu* are eating'. Another later messenger brought back word that the *Azungu* had finished breakfast and were ready, and the companies sallied out, and the machine-guns were arranged facing the kraal exit. Then the Ngoni warriors sprang out, holding their shields before them, and were met by a hail of fire from the machine-guns. To their horror they found their invincible shields were no longer a protection. Many fell, the rest fled, and the huge village[2] was looted and burned. 'The *Azungu* war was too strong', is the way they invariably end this often repeated tale.

Overwhelming though this military catastrophe was, to the Ngoni it is the events preceding and following the 'war' on which they dwell, when in the villages they speak of this period of white contact. 'We are not ashamed for the war', they say, 'We are ashamed for losing our cattle and our land'. They tell to this day how a certain Carl Weise, a German, came up from Portuguese East Africa trading,[3]

[1] In the Report of Justice Maughan on the North Charterland Inquiry he says, 'It was a remarkably well-managed little war and the Ngoni accepted their defeat in good spirit like other Bantu races'.

[2] Over 3 miles across.

[3] in 1885.